2.8 Literature: Romeo and Juliet: 2-hour Pack

AQA 8702 · about 120 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

Extract: Romeo and Juliet, Act 1 Scene 5 (the meeting at the Capulets' feast)

Text reproduced from Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare, first performed and published in the 1590s. The play is in the public domain worldwide; this extract is quoted directly from the play text, not adapted, paraphrased or AI-generated. Line numbers have been added for ease of reference in these questions.

In this extract, Romeo has gate-crashed a feast at the house of the Capulets, his family's sworn enemies, and sees Juliet for the first time.

01 ROMEO. If I profane with my unworthiest hand

02 This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:

03 My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand

04 To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

05

06 JULIET. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,

07 Which mannerly devotion shows in this;

08 For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,

09 And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

10

11 ROMEO. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

12

13 JULIET. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

14

15 ROMEO. O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;

16 They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

17

18 JULIET. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

19

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20 ROMEO. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

21

22 [He kisses her.]

23

24 JULIET. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

25

26 ROMEO. Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged!

27 Give me my sin again.

28

29 [He kisses her again.]

30

31 JULIET. You kiss by the book.

32

33 [Enter Nurse.]

34

35 NURSE. Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

1 Starting with this extract, explore how Shakespeare presents Juliet as a character who defies the expectations placed on her across the play.

Write about:
- how Shakespeare presents Juliet in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents Juliet in the rest of the play

(Total for Question 1 is 8 marks)

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2 Explore how Shakespeare uses religious imagery in this extract to present the meeting between Romeo and Juliet.

Write about:
- the religious imagery Shakespeare uses
- how the language creates a sense of the characters' feelings for each other

Refer to the extract in your answer.

(Total for Question 2 is 8 marks)

3 Explain how the structure of this extract, particularly its use of a shared sonnet, affects the audience's understanding of Romeo and Juliet's relationship at this point in the play.

(Total for Question 3 is 6 marks)

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4 Explain how this extract reflects Elizabethan ideas about courtship and social convention.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

5 Explain how an Elizabethan audience's beliefs about fate and destiny might have shaped their response to this first meeting between Romeo and Juliet.

(Total for Question 5 is 6 marks)

6 Explore how Shakespeare presents Romeo's changing emotions across the play.

Write about:
- Romeo's feelings at different points in the play
- how Shakespeare presents these changes through his language and actions

(Total for Question 6 is 8 marks)

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7 Explore how Shakespeare presents conflict through the characters of Tybalt and Mercutio.

Write about:
- how Tybalt and Mercutio each contribute to conflict in the play
- how Shakespeare uses their language and actions to present them

(Total for Question 7 is 8 marks)

8 Explore how Shakespeare presents the connection between love and violence in the play.

Write about:
- how love and violence are linked at different points in the play
- how Shakespeare's language presents this connection

(Total for Question 8 is 8 marks)

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9 Explore how Shakespeare presents the idea of fate across the play.

Write about:
- how fate is referred to at different points in the play
- how Shakespeare's language and structure present the idea of fate

(Total for Question 9 is 8 marks)

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10 Explain how Shakespeare uses dramatic irony to create tension for the audience across the play.

(Total for Question 10 is 6 marks)

11 Explore the dramatic function of the Nurse in the play.

Write about:
- what the Nurse contributes to the play's plot and mood
- how Shakespeare presents her relationship with Juliet

(Total for Question 11 is 6 marks)

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12 Starting with this extract, explore how Shakespeare presents the theme of conflict in Romeo and Juliet.

Write about:
- how conflict is hinted at or shown in this extract and the scene that follows it
- how Shakespeare presents conflict in the rest of the play

(Total for Question 12 is 20 marks)

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13 Starting with this extract, explore how far Shakespeare presents love as something that defies social convention.

Write about:
- how love defies convention in this extract
- how love defies convention elsewhere in the play

(Total for Question 13 is 20 marks)

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14 'Romeo and Juliet are victims of fate rather than agents of their own downfall.'

Starting with this extract, explore how far you agree with this statement, referring to the rest of the play in your answer.

Write about:
- how this extract can be read in relation to fate and choice
- how fate and personal choice are presented across the rest of the play

(Total for Question 14 is 24 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.8 Literature: Romeo and Juliet: 2-hour Pack

Question 1

Level 4 Detailed, perceptive response: sustained, well-supported argument tracing Juliet's defiance across the extract and the wider play; judicious choice of references; sophisticated use of subject terminology. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: clear argument about Juliet's defiance, supported with relevant references from the extract and the wider play; clear use of subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some relevant response: some relevant points about Juliet, supported with limited or generalised references; some use of subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: simple or descriptive comment on Juliet with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- In the extract, Juliet matches and extends Romeo's sonnet rather than passively receiving it, showing wit and agency in an encounter she could not have expected to have that evening.
- Juliet initiates the marriage proposal from the balcony in Act 2 Scene 2 ('If that thy bent of love be honourable, thy purpose marriage'), taking practical control of the relationship rather than waiting to be courted in the conventional way.
- Juliet defies her father's authority by refusing to marry Paris in Act 3 Scene 5, standing up to Lord Capulet's fury even though disobedience carried serious social and financial risk for a daughter of her class.
- Juliet shows extraordinary courage in Act 4 Scene 3 by choosing to drink the Friar's untested potion alone, facing her fear of waking early in the tomb, which shows a resolve well beyond what was expected of a sheltered thirteen-year-old girl.
- Her final act, taking her own life with Romeo's dagger, is a decisive, deliberate choice rather than a passive fate, reinforcing that Shakespeare presents her throughout as more decisive and self-determining than the obedient daughter Elizabethan society expected.

Question 2

Level 4 Detailed and perceptive analysis of language: analyses the effects of Shakespeare's religious imagery with precision; selects a judicious range of textual detail from across the extract; makes sophisticated and accurate use of subject terminology. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation of language: explains clearly the effects of the religious imagery; selects a range of relevant quotations; makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some understanding and comment: attempts to comment on the effect of the religious imagery; selects some appropriate detail; makes some use of subject terminology, not always securely. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited comment: offers simple comment on the religious language; selects simple references; makes simple or no use of subject terminology. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- The extended metaphor of 'shrine', 'pilgrim' and 'saint' elevates Juliet to something sacred, showing Romeo idolises her instantly rather than seeing her as an ordinary woman.
- The verb 'profane' suggests Romeo sees his own touch as almost sinful in the presence of something holy, dramatising the intensity and reverence of his feelings.
- The shared sonnet form (three quatrains of question and answer followed by a rhyming couplet resolved by a kiss) mirrors courtship, with the characters completing each other's rhymes as though instinctively matched.
- The wordplay on 'sin', 'trespass' and 'prayer' allows flirtation to be conducted through wit and metaphor rather than direct statement, fitting the decorum expected of a first meeting at a formal feast.
- The religious language also foreshadows tragedy: love expressed as devotion or worship hints at the intensity that will later prove fatal, since both characters treat their love as something absolute rather than measured.
- Juliet's matching and extending of Romeo's conceit (rather than simply accepting it) shows the language presenting her as his intellectual equal from their very first exchange.

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Question 3

Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation of structure: explains clearly the effects of the sonnet structure and its placement in the scene; selects a range of relevant examples; clear and accurate use of subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some understanding and comment on structure: some appropriate examples; some use of subject terminology, not always secure. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited comment on structure: simple references; simple or no subject terminology. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- The dialogue is structured as a single 14-line sonnet split between the two characters, so their voices interlock in rhyme (ABAB CDCD EFEF GG) before either of them has properly spoken to the other.
- This structural device suggests an instant, almost supernatural compatibility, as if the two characters were destined to complete each other's lines, reinforcing the play's theme of star-crossed fate.
- The sonnet builds to its rhyming couplet exactly at the moment of the first kiss, so the structure itself creates a sense of inevitability and climax within the scene.
- The extract is placed at a feast filled with feuding families and public danger (Tybalt recognises Romeo shortly afterwards), so the private, ordered calm of the sonnet form contrasts sharply with the surrounding social conflict.
- A second, shorter exchange (lines 24-31) begins a further sonnet that is interrupted by the Nurse, structurally suggesting that their private world is fragile and will soon be intruded upon by the wider feud.

Question 4

Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation of context: clearly links relevant Elizabethan social/historical context to specific detail in the extract; well-integrated into the argument. **5-6**

Level 2 Some understanding of context: makes some relevant links between context and the extract, though not always fully developed. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited awareness of context: simple or generalised comment, with little clear link to the extract. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- In Elizabethan society, unmarried young women were expected to be modest and were closely chaperoned, so Juliet speaking wittily and directly to a strange young man at a feast would have seemed daring, especially as Romeo is uninvited and masked.
- Courtship conventions of the period valued elaborate, courtly language and religious/Petrarchan comparisons (comparing a beloved to a saint) as a sign of sincere, elevated devotion, which explains why Romeo's extended metaphor would be recognised by an Elizabethan audience as a genuine declaration of love rather than mere flattery.
- The scene takes place under the watchful eye of the Capulet household, reflecting how courtship was expected to be supervised; the Nurse's sudden arrival at line 35 reasserts this social control just as the couple is left briefly, and dangerously, alone together.
- Marriages among families of the Capulets' and Montagues' social standing were often arranged for family advantage (as shown later when Juliet's father arranges her marriage to Paris), so a spontaneous, unsanctioned attraction between the children of feuding houses would have been seen as a serious threat to social order, adding dramatic tension for the original audience.

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Question 5

Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation of context: clearly links Elizabethan beliefs about fate/providence to specific detail in the extract or wider play; well-integrated. **5-6**

Level 2 Some understanding of context: makes some relevant links between context and the extract, though not always fully developed. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited awareness of context: simple or generalised comment, with little clear link to the extract. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- The Prologue's description of the lovers as 'star-crossed' would have primed an Elizabethan audience, who commonly believed the movements of the stars and planets could influence or predetermine human events, to view this meeting as fated rather than accidental.
- Elizabethan audiences often held providential beliefs, seeing tragic events as part of a divine or cosmic plan; the religious language of the extract (shrine, saint, prayer) may therefore have suggested to them that the lovers' union was, in a sense, sacred or preordained, even though it will ultimately end in disaster.
- Because the audience already knows from the Prologue that the couple will die, the intensity and instant certainty of their language in this extract would have been read with dramatic irony, as a joyful moment already shadowed by the fate the audience knows is coming.
- The setting of the meeting, at a feast that Romeo attends uninvited purely by chance, would have reinforced the idea that the pair's union came about through forces beyond their control, consistent with an Elizabethan sense that fate operates through apparently ordinary coincidences.

Question 6

Level 4 Detailed, perceptive response: sustained, well-supported argument tracing Romeo's emotional development across the play; judicious range of references; sophisticated subject terminology. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: clear argument about Romeo's emotions, supported with relevant references from across the play; clear subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some relevant response: some relevant points about Romeo, supported with limited or generalised references; some subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: simple or descriptive comment on Romeo with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- At the start of the play Romeo is presented as melodramatically lovesick over Rosaline, using conventional oxymorons ('O brawling love, O loving hate') that suggest performed rather than genuine feeling.
- In this extract and the balcony scene that follows, his language becomes more direct and inventive (the religious sonnet, then the astronomical imagery of Juliet as the sun), suggesting his feelings for Juliet are presented as more sincere and specific than his earlier infatuation.
- In Act 3 Scene 1, grief and rage overtake Romeo after Mercutio's death, and his language becomes short, violent and impulsive ('fire-eyed fury'), showing Shakespeare presenting a rapid shift from lover to avenger.
- His despair at being banished in Act 3 Scene 3 is presented through hyperbolic language and even attempted self-harm, showing emotional extremity that foreshadows his later suicide.
- By Act 5, his decision to buy poison and die beside Juliet is delivered in calmer, more resolute language, suggesting Shakespeare presents a Romeo who has moved from impulsive passion to a grim, settled determination.
- Overall, Shakespeare presents Romeo's emotions as consistently extreme and immediate, whether in love, grief or despair, suggesting impulsiveness is a defining trait that contributes directly to the tragedy.

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Question 7

Level 4 Detailed, perceptive response: sustained, well-supported comparison of how Tybalt and Mercutio drive conflict; judicious range of references; sophisticated subject terminology. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: clear comparison of the two characters' roles in conflict, supported with relevant references; clear subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some relevant response: some relevant points, supported with limited or generalised references; some subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: simple or descriptive comment with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Tybalt is presented as aggressively loyal to the Capulet name; his declaration 'I hate the word [peace], as I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee' shows conflict as something he embraces almost as a matter of identity.
- Tybalt recognises Romeo's voice at the feast in this extract's scene and is only prevented from attacking him by Lord Capulet, showing that the private happiness of the sonnet exchange is immediately threatened by the ongoing public feud.
- Mercutio, by contrast, mocks the feud and courtly love conventions alike through wit and wordplay (the Queen Mab speech), presenting conflict as something almost provoked through provocation and pride rather than deep-seated hatred.
- Mercutio's fatal wounding, caused partly because Romeo tries to keep the peace, shows Shakespeare presenting conflict as something that escalates unpredictably even when a character (Mercutio) treats it lightly at first ('a plague o' both your houses').
- The contrast between Tybalt's controlled, deliberate aggression and Mercutio's impulsive, verbal provocation shows Shakespeare presenting several different sources of conflict, suggesting that the feud is sustained both by genuine hatred and by pride and honour among the young men of Verona.

Question 8

Level 4 Detailed, perceptive response: sustained, well-supported exploration of the love/violence connection with judicious range of references and sophisticated subject terminology. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: clear exploration with relevant references and clear subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some relevant response: some relevant points, supported with limited or generalised references; some subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: simple or descriptive comment with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- The Prologue calls the lovers' passion 'death-marked love' before the plot even begins, immediately fusing the ideas of love and violent death for the audience.
- Romeo's oxymorons early in the play ('O brawling love, O loving hate') present love and conflict as intertwined even before he meets Juliet, suggesting the two forces are linked throughout Verona's culture, not just within the central romance.
- The meeting in this extract takes place at a feast that Tybalt wants to turn violent, so the tenderness of the sonnet is staged in direct proximity to the threat of a fight, reinforcing the connection structurally as well as verbally.
- Romeo's love for Juliet directly causes violence when he tries to make peace with Tybalt (out of loyalty to his new wife) but this instead leads to Mercutio's death and Romeo's own furious killing of Tybalt.
- The final scene fuses love and violent death completely, as both lovers use weapons (poison and a dagger) to die beside each other, so that the play's climactic act of love is inseparable from an act of violence against the self.

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Question 9

Level 4 Detailed, perceptive response: sustained, well-supported exploration of fate as a theme with judicious range of references and sophisticated subject terminology. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: clear exploration with relevant references and clear subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some relevant response: some relevant points, supported with limited or generalised references; some subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: simple or descriptive comment with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- The Prologue's phrase 'star-crossed lovers' establishes fate as a controlling idea from the outset, using astronomical imagery to suggest events are governed by forces beyond the characters' control.
- Before the feast, Romeo has a premonition of 'some consequence yet hanging in the stars', which the audience recognises, through dramatic irony, as an accurate warning of his own death.
- The extract's religious imagery (shrine, saint, prayer) can be read as reinforcing a sense that the lovers' union is guided by a power beyond themselves, even as it also foreshadows their eventual sacrifice.
- Repeated accidents and bad timing throughout the play (the unread letter to Romeo, the Friar's delay reaching the tomb) are structured so that fate appears to work through coincidence rather than a single dramatic event, building a sense of mounting inevitability.
- By the final scene, the Prince's closing description of the lovers' deaths ties the whole plot back to fate and the feud together, suggesting Shakespeare presents fate not as a replacement for human choice but as something that works alongside the characters' impulsive decisions.

Question 10

Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation: explains clearly how dramatic irony is used to build tension, with a range of relevant, well-chosen examples; clear subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some understanding and comment: some appropriate examples of dramatic irony; some use of subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited comment: simple references to dramatic irony; simple or no subject terminology. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- The Prologue tells the audience the ending before the play begins, so every hopeful moment (including the meeting in this extract) is watched with knowledge the characters do not have, creating sustained tension.
- When Juliet takes the Friar's potion, the audience knows it is a sleeping draught, but Romeo does not, so his despair on finding her 'dead' body is almost unbearable for an audience who knows the truth.
- Mercutio's dying curse, 'a plague o' both your houses', gains extra force from dramatic irony, since the audience already senses (from the Prologue) that the feud will indeed bring further deaths.
- The near-miss of Friar Laurence's letter failing to reach Romeo builds tension precisely because the audience knows a simple piece of information, if received, would prevent the tragedy, making the outcome feel both accidental and unbearably close to being avoided.

Question 11

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: clear exploration of the Nurse's function, supported with relevant references from across the play; clear subject terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some relevant response: some relevant points, supported with limited or generalised references; some subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: simple or descriptive comment with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- The Nurse's interruption at the very end of this extract ('Madam, your mother craves a word with you') is structurally significant, ending the private sonnet exchange and returning the scene to the world of family authority and the feud.
- Her earthy, comic and rambling speech (recalling Juliet's weaning as a baby) provides contrast and light relief against the play's escalating tragedy, giving the audience brief relief from tension before renewed conflict.
- As Juliet's confidante she initially supports the secret relationship, acting as go-between for the wedding arrangements, showing her as a warm, loyal substitute mother figure.
- Her later advice that Juliet should simply marry Paris and forget Romeo marks a turning point, showing Shakespeare presenting her as ultimately pragmatic rather than idealistic, which leaves Juliet feeling isolated and drives her to rely on the Friar instead.

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Question 12

Level 5 Critical, exploratory response: exploratory, critical response to task and whole text; judicious use of a range of references, including embedded quotations; analyses effects of Shakespeare's language, form and structure with subject terminology used precisely and consistently; exploration of contextual factors integrated fully where relevant.	**17-20**
Level 4 Detailed, well-structured response: consistently clear, detailed response to task and whole text; well-chosen range of references; explains effects of language, form and structure with subject terminology used accurately; understanding of relevant contexts clearly shown.	**13-16**
Level 3 Clear response: clear understanding of task and whole text with relevant, mostly appropriate references; explains effects of language/structure with some accuracy of subject terminology; awareness of relevant context.	**9-12**
Level 2 Some understanding: attempts to respond to task with some references, though not always relevant; comments on language/structure with limited use of subject terminology; some awareness of context.	**5-8**
Level 1 Simple, limited response: simple or narrative response with limited or no textual reference; simple or no comment on language/structure; little or no awareness of context.	**1-4**

Indicative content:

- In the extract itself, conflict is present only by implication: the couple's private, courteous exchange is staged within a feast at the house of the family's sworn enemies, so the audience feels an undercurrent of risk beneath the tenderness.
- Immediately after this extract, Tybalt recognises Romeo's voice and vows revenge, showing that conflict is never far from even the play's most peaceful, romantic moments, and structurally frames the whole meeting with danger.
- Shakespeare opens the play proper with a brawl between servants in Act 1 Scene 1, establishing that conflict in Verona is embedded even at the lowest social level, not confined to the heads of the feuding houses.
- The killing of Mercutio and then Tybalt in Act 3 Scene 1 shows conflict escalating rapidly from wordplay to fatal violence within a single scene, marking the play's turning point from comedy towards tragedy.
- Conflict is also presented within families, not only between them: Lord Capulet's furious response to Juliet's refusal to marry Paris in Act 3 Scene 5 shows generational conflict compounding the external feud.
- The Prince's role as an external authority who repeatedly threatens punishment but fails to stop the feud until the final deaths suggests Shakespeare presents conflict as something that ordinary civic authority alone cannot resolve.
- By the final scene, the deaths of Romeo and Juliet finally force reconciliation between the families, suggesting Shakespeare ultimately presents conflict as being resolved only through tragic sacrifice rather than reason or law.
- Strong answers might discuss how the extract's calm, ordered sonnet form is used by Shakespeare as a deliberate structural contrast to the violent, fragmented verse of the fight scenes, reinforcing the theme through form as well as content.

Question 13

Level 5 Critical, exploratory response: exploratory, critical response to task and whole text; judicious use of a range of references, including embedded quotations; analyses effects of Shakespeare's language, form and structure with subject terminology used precisely and consistently; contextual factors integrated fully where relevant.	**17-20**
Level 4 Detailed, well-structured response: consistently clear, detailed response to task and whole text; well-chosen range of references; explains effects of language, form and structure with subject terminology used accurately; understanding of relevant contexts clearly shown.	**13-16**
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Level 2 Some understanding: attempts to respond to task with some references, though not always relevant; comments on language/structure with limited use of subject terminology; some awareness of context.	**5-8**
Level 1 Simple, limited response: simple or narrative response with limited or no textual reference; simple or no comment on language/structure; little or no awareness of context.	**1-4**

Indicative content:

- In the extract, Romeo courts Juliet without formal introduction or family permission, and Juliet responds directly and wittily rather than modestly deferring, both of which defy the expected conventions of chaperoned Elizabethan courtship.
- The lovers' shared sonnet defies convention structurally as well: sonnets were traditionally addressed by one lover about another (as in Petrarchan tradition), but here the form is shared equally between them, suggesting a mutual, non-hierarchical love unusual for the period.
- That Romeo and Juliet belong to feuding families makes their attraction a direct defiance of family loyalty and social duty, the most fundamental convention broken in the play, established as soon as each learns the other's name at the end of Act 1 Scene 5.
- Juliet's proposal of marriage to Romeo at the balcony scene reverses the expected roles of the passive, courted woman and the active, courting man, presenting her love as bold and self-directed rather than conventionally submissive.
- The secret marriage arranged by Friar Laurence defies the convention that marriages, especially among noble families, should be arranged with parental knowledge and consent, showing love and duty placed in direct opposition.
- Juliet's refusal to marry Paris, a socially advantageous match approved by her father, is the play's clearest instance of romantic love overriding the convention of obedient, arranged marriage, and it costs her Lord Capulet's approval entirely.
- A convincing answer might argue that Shakespeare ultimately presents this defiance of convention as both admirable and dangerous: it produces a love of unusual honesty and intensity, but its refusal to accommodate the surrounding social order is also what makes the tragedy possible.
- Strong answers may also note that the Friar's willingness to marry the couple secretly, hoping it might end the feud, shows even trusted authority figures colluding in this defiance, suggesting the whole of Verona's social order is, in different ways, complicit in testing its own conventions.

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Question 14

Level 6 Compelling, critical evaluation: sustained, sophisticated evaluation of the statement across the whole play; judicious, precisely selected references including embedded quotation; perceptive analysis of language, form and structure with consistently precise subject terminology; contextual understanding woven seamlessly into the argument.	**21-24**
Level 5 Critical, exploratory evaluation: exploratory, critical response to the statement with a clear line of argument sustained across the whole text; judicious range of references; analyses effects of language, form and structure with precise subject terminology; contextual factors integrated fully where relevant.	**17-20**
Level 4 Detailed, well-structured evaluation: consistently clear, detailed evaluation of the statement; well-chosen range of references; explains effects of language, form and structure with subject terminology used accurately; understanding of relevant contexts clearly shown.	**13-16**
Level 3 Clear evaluation: clear response to the statement with relevant, mostly appropriate references; explains effects of language/structure with some accuracy of subject terminology; awareness of relevant context.	**9-12**
Level 2 Some evaluation: attempts to respond to the statement with some references, though not always relevant; comments on language/structure with limited use of subject terminology; some awareness of context.	**5-8**
Level 1 Simple, limited evaluation: simple or narrative response with limited or no textual reference; simple or no comment on language/structure; little or no awareness of context.	**1-4**

Indicative content:

- Agree (fate): the Prologue's 'star-crossed lovers' frames the entire play as predetermined before a single choice is made, inviting the audience to read every subsequent event, including this extract's meeting, as fated rather than freely chosen.
- Agree (fate): the extract itself arises from pure chance, Romeo attends the feast uninvited only because an illiterate servant happens to ask him to read the guest list, suggesting the lovers' meeting is engineered by coincidence beyond their control.
- Agree (fate): the Friar's letter failing to reach Romeo due to a quarantine, entirely outside any character's control, directly causes the final tragedy, supporting a reading that circumstance overwhelms intention.
- Disagree (choice): Romeo actively chooses to attend the feast, to pursue Juliet within it, to fight Tybalt in Act 3, and to buy poison in Act 5, each a deliberate decision that accelerates the tragedy rather than a fate imposed on him.
- Disagree (choice): Juliet's decisions in this extract and beyond, matching Romeo's sonnet, proposing marriage, refusing Paris, drinking the potion, are all presented as active, wilful acts rather than passive submission to destiny.
- Disagree (choice): the impulsiveness that runs through both characters (marrying within a day of meeting, Romeo's instant despair leading to suicide before checking Juliet is truly dead) suggests personality and haste, not fate, are what drive the tragedy.
- A convincing evaluation will likely argue that Shakespeare presents fate and choice as intertwined rather than opposed: the play's language of stars and destiny provides a poetic frame, while the plot mechanics repeatedly show impulsive human decisions turning chance encounters into disaster.
- The strongest responses may note that this ambiguity is itself the point: by refusing to resolve whether fate or choice is ultimately responsible, Shakespeare invites each audience to weigh the balance differently, which is part of why the play continues to provoke debate.
- Reference to the extract can anchor the debate throughout: the sonnet's sense of instant, almost supernatural compatibility supports a fate-centred reading, while Juliet's witty, deliberate matching of Romeo's words supports a reading that stresses her own agency from the outset.

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